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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

67717

COUNTRY Lebanon

DATE:

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SUBJECT Relations With Syria, Egypt
and Turkey

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SUPPLEMENT

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The Lebanese Consul in Istanbul, Antun Frans'is, is said to have made the following statements with regard to the various problems confronting Lebanon in her relations with Turkey and the Arab countries:

Relations With Syria

1. The Consul is reported to have intimated that, whatever the policy of the Syrian Government in the matter of Syrian claims on the Hatay might be, Lebanon would always be on the side of Syria. He stated that Syria and Lebanon had the same interests and were bound by their common membership in the Arab League. The Consul added that not even Iraq (with Nuri Pasha Sa'id at the head of the government) would ever fail to uphold Syria in her just claims.

Relations With Egypt

2. In speaking of Egypt's differences with Great Britain over the Sudanese question, Frans'is is reported to have expressed full sympathy with the Egyptian cause. He explained that the international situation today was such that it was in the interest, not only of Syria and Lebanon, but also of all the Arab states, to show a united front in their relations with the great powers. He admitted that it was becoming more and more necessary for the Arab states to turn to Soviet Russia for political backing and support; however, he stressed the point that the Arab states were not planning to adopt the Soviet ideology.

Relations With Turkey

3. As for Turco-Lebanese relations, the Consul is said to have confirmed the fact that a Lebanese delegation was expected in Ankara during the first weeks in February, in order to discuss the exchange of Turkish property in Lebanon and Lebanese property in Turkey. Lebanese property in Turkey, he explained, consisted of the following two classes:
 - (a) Property owned by former Turkish citizens, now Lebanese subjects, who live in Lebanon, even though, according to the Turkish law, these landholders are no longer the legal owners, as they fled from Turkey or were deported by the Turkish Government after the First World War: others fled from Turkey at the time of the Turkish annexation of the Hatay.

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- (b) Property which actually belonged to Lebanese citizens, living in Turkey, Lebanon or elsewhere. In this instance, the question consisted in obtaining permission from the Turkish Government to allow those persons who wished to do so to sell their property and to take the proceeds to Lebanon, or to allow landowners to collect and transfer to Lebanon the rents and revenues which have accrued from their holdings. Considerable sums in rent are at present frozen in Turkish banks.
4. In addition to those properties, there are the pensions of former employees of the Ottoman Bank and various Turkish administrations, now Lebanese subjects, who have not been paid for some time, and who, in order to receive these pensions, must reside in Turkey. Many of these employees do not wish to come back to Turkey, as they are now settled in Lebanon and, even if they did so wish, would probably not be granted the requisite visas by the Turkish Government.
5. The Lebanese Consul is reported to have indicated that Turkey, in return, claimed the exchange of all Turkish property situated in Lebanese territory, including that, now in litigation, which belongs to the heirs of Sultan Abdul Hamid. However, he said that no action could be taken in this case before the Lebanese and Palestinian courts had reached a decision.
6. The Lebanese delegation to Turkey would also discuss the question of a commercial treaty or a commercial modus vivendi between Turkey and Lebanon, according to Consul Frans'is.
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[REDACTED] distributed 11 January 1947,
described similar protocols under consideration by the two countries in December 1946.

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